

Last week we finished with the definition of individual correct knowledge that is the awareness aspect of omniscience. Let's go over the definition again a little bit because we need to correct something.

It is:

**a final knowledge distinguished by having abandoned attachment and obstruction (or impediment)<sup>1</sup> with respect to the subject matter to be explained and the means of explaining it, in dependence on a final concentration that serves as its empowering condition.**

We have already looked at the definition but there is one thing that we need to elaborate on – the last part of the definition, which is common with the definitions involving many of the other unique qualities of the buddha, where it says that all of those things are obtained “in dependence on the final concentration that serves as its empowering condition.”

So here we're talking about the special empowering condition that allows the buddha to teach the dharma – and that special empowering condition is the buddha's omniscience. We're also talking about the final concentration – and this concentration is the cause that allows the power to teach the dharma. The buddha enters equipoise having attained 8 types of concentration, and it is only by being in that type of equipoise that the buddha has higher perception. So this is therefore the special means that empowers the buddha to have full understanding of the predispositions and interests of the trainees, of their sharpness or dullness, and their capacity to be trained, and so forth. So for the buddha to have this higher perception he relies on the empowering condition, or the cause, which is the special power of concentration and complete dexterity that he attained in every type of concentration.

So we go into the classification:

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When divided, there are:

**(i) The individual correct knowledge of phenomena which engages—without attachment relishing the taste and without the obstruction (or impediment) of knowledge obscurations—the objects that are the enumerations of names that describe the twelve branches of scriptures<sup>2</sup>.**

**(ii) The individual correct knowledge of meaning which engages—without attachment of relishing the taste and without the obstruction (or impediment) of knowledge obscurations—the objects that are the specific and general characteristics of phenomena, which are the subject matter described by the twelve branches of scriptures.**

**(iii) The individual correct knowledge of terminology which engages—without attachment of relishing the taste and without the impediment of knowledge obscurations—the objects that are the languages of the six migrations or the languages of individual places.**

**(iv) The individual correct knowledge of confidence which engages—without attachment of relishing the taste and without the obstruction (or impediment) of knowledge obscurations—the objects that are the classification of the entities and aspects of substantial existents and imputed existents that are manifest phenomena, such as the Dharma, for the sake of revealing them to others.**

So looking at the first one. We're talking about "individual correct knowledge of phenomena, which engages—without attachment relishing the taste and without the obstruction (or impediment) of knowledge obscurations—the objects that are the enumerations of names that describe the twelve branches of scriptures."

So all the scriptures of the buddha are categorized into 12 branches and they can be condensed down to 3 baskets, or the tripitaka – so we have the basket or collection of sutras, the basket of vinaya, and the basket of abhidharma. Here it talks about objects that are the enumeration of names. This can be taken to mean name equivalents.

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We have many terms describing the same thing, many variations of terms. But here it should be taken to be the actual words that are to be taught. So “it engages the objects”. Which objects? The actual words of all the teachings – of the sutras, the vinaya and abidharma and so forth. How does it do this? It does it without attachment of relishing the taste and without knowledge obscurations.

So the first one talks about individual correct knowledge that has to do with the words of the text, the words of the scripture. The second one is individual correct knowledge of meaning, and it engages “the objects that are the specific and general characteristics of phenomena, which are the subject matter described by the twelve branches of scriptures.” So this time we’re talking about the meaning and when we look at the meaning we look at the nature or entity of phenomena, and at their characteristics. So that’s why it says “specific and general characteristics of various phenomena.” Because every phenomena has its own individual characteristics, but it will also have some general characteristics of its class, and so forth.

So how does it do it? It does it without any attachment and so forth, and without hindrance in terms of knowledge obscurations.

Now we come to the third – the individual correct knowledge of terminology, which engages “the objects that are the languages of the six migrations or the languages of individual places”.

So you know this verse in the king of prayers?

*"In the language of gods, nagas, and yakshas,  
In the language of demons and humans too,  
In however many kinds of speech there may be-  
I shall proclaim the Dharma in the language of all!"*

So when the buddha teaches he will teach in the languages of every class of migration, and he’ll also teach in local languages and dialects. And how will he teach? He will teach without any attachment and without any hindrance from knowledge obscurations.

The last one is individual correct knowledge of confidence, which engages “the objects that are the classification of the entities and aspects of substantial existents and imputed existents that are manifest phenomena, such as the Dharma, for the sake of revealing

them to others.” So when the buddha teaches he has incredible confidence because he’s able to teach all the classifications of phenomena. So classifications could be endless – classifications and aspects of phenomena could refer to the contaminated and uncontaminated; to things that are positive, negative or neutral; to things that are a result of something or a cause of something; and so forth. So this refers to the ability to talk about an infinite number of classifications, and the way a buddha would do this is without any attachment and without any hindrance of knowledge obscurations.

So, in the last line of this paragraph it says **“classification of the entities and aspects of substantial existents and imputed existents that are manifest phenomena, *such as the Dharma...*”**. So when it says “such as dharma”, it means ‘dharma etcetera’. To explain that in more detail, the buddha is able to teach according to the level of the disciples. If the disciples are hearers he will explain to them the selflessness of persons. If the disciples are solitary realisers he will explain to them the lack of duality. And if the disciples are bodhisattvas or practitioners of the Mayahana he will talk to them about selflessness of phenomena. And he does that with complete lack of attachment and without any hindrance of knowledge obscurations. He has full confidence and is able to submit that this or that phenomenon is a substantial existent or an imputed existent and so forth.

We have a quotation:

**This is because [Maitreya's] *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras (Mahayanasutralamkarakarika)* says:**

**With respect to the support and supported,  
Speech and the means of good explanation,  
Excellent teacher who does not possess impediments to  
intelligence,  
I prostrate to you.**

So the support here refers to the words – individual correct knowledge of the words. It refers to transmitted teachings, or transmitted words. Then the supported is the meaning – the individual correct knowledge of the meaning of dharma. Speech refers to individual correct knowledge of terminology. And the ‘means to good explanation’ refers to individual correct knowledge of

confidence. So there are 4 types of individual correct knowledge. The next line says ‘excellent teacher who does not possess impediments’, which means he does not possess any attachments and is not hindered by knowledge obscurations.

So remember what we said last week, – that individual correct knowledges are also posited within bodhisattvas from the 9<sup>th</sup> ground onwards. So it is very important to make the distinction between those and the individual correct knowledges that are unique and exclusive to the continuum of an arya buddha. This is the reason why in the definition on page 71 it says ‘the individual correct knowledge of omniscience’ – to make it clear that it is the unique quality that is found in the continuum of an arya buddha. Because if that were not highlighted then one could be left thinking that we’re talking about the common or the general types of knowledge that exist for bodhisattvas. And if that were the case we would lose one of the categories of the unique qualities of the buddha, which means the list on the unique qualities of the buddha would be incomplete.

If the term is abbreviated and it just talks about individual correct knowledge then that leaves it open – it doesn’t specify that this is individual correct knowledge existing for the omniscient mind of a buddha. So if you just use the abbreviated term, it is ambiguous about whether you’re referring to that existing for bodhisattvas or to that existing for buddhas. And if you leave it like this it invites debate. Such as: is the list of the individual correct knowledges of a buddha complete, or are we missing some? And so forth.

So this completes the four individual correct knowledges. We continue with the next one.

#### **(4) The eighteen unmixed attributes of a buddha**

**In order to indicate them, [Haribhadra’s *Clear Meaning*] says:**

**The six aspects that do not possess (1) mistakes, (2) senseless speech, (3) the degeneration of mindfulness, (4) non-equipose of mind, (5) the discrimination of differences, (6) the indifference of not examining individually;**

So up to here we have six that are included within the conduct of the buddha...

**the six aspects that do not possess degeneration from (7) aspiration, (8) joyous effort, (9) mindfulness, (10) concentration, (11) wisdom, (12) liberation;**

These six are included within realisations...

**the three aspects preceded by and following from pristine wisdom—the enlightened activities of (13) the exalted body, (14) the exalted speech, and (15) the exalted mind;**

These three are included within enlightened activities...

**and the three aspects of unattached, unobstructed (or unimpeded) exalted wisdom regarding the arising of the (16) past, (17) future, and (18) present: thus, these are the aspects of the eighteen unmixed attributes of a buddha.**

So let's look at the list of the first 6, which are included within conduct. So it begins by saying 'does not possess mistakes'. 'Mistakes' here refers to the physical conduct of the buddha. So the physical conduct of the buddha is not mistaken in any way. The second one is "does not possess senseless speech". So the verbal conduct of the buddha is not senseless. The third one is "degeneration of mindfulness". That seems pretty clear. The fourth one is "non-equipoise of mind" It means that the buddha is always in equipoise. The fifth one is "the discrimination of differences." Here we're talking about the difference between samsara and nirvana, or the difference between cyclic existence and peace. Obviously conventionally these are very different phenomena, but ultimately there is no difference between them. So the buddha understands that ultimately samara and nirvana have no difference. Now the next one, number six, says the "indifference of not examining individually." 'Examining individually' means to examine each being individually and deciding on the correct time and method to teach them. So the buddha has not given up the purpose of liberating sentient beings, and therefore he does not have any indifference that will cause him not to care about examining the right time or method for each being. So the buddha does not have indifference for

each sentient being individually.

The next group is six aspects that have to do with the realization of the buddha. So “the six aspects that do not possess degeneration from aspiration, joyous effort, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom and liberation.”

We will go into that group of six (from number 6 to 12 in our list) later on, when we have the extensive explanation.

The next category is enlightened activities and we have 3 – enlightened activities of body, speech and mind. So these are the deeds of the buddha. They originate from the pristine wisdom dharma body. The pristine wisdom dharma body is the empowering condition, or the cause, that brings about those three types of enlightened activity. And this is why it says “the three aspects preceded by and following from pristine wisdom”.

There are preceded by pristine wisdom because pristine wisdom is the substantial cause, or condition, that brings forward this type of activity.

Now where it says “following from” these words can be interpreted in two ways. You can actually take the meaning literally to indicate that they follow on from pristine wisdom. Because pristine wisdom is the cause that precedes them, they will follow after pristine wisdom. But if we look at the commentary the way these words are interpreted is that they are accompanied, or happen simultaneously, with pristine wisdom.

And the last category we have is the three aspects of pristine wisdom regarding the past, the present and the future. And it says here they are three aspects that are unattached and unobstructed. It is important to have both terms because the first terms means they are free of afflictive obscurations, and unobstructed means they are not hindered by knowledge obscurations with respect to the past, present and future.

And then the quotation finishes by saying “these are the aspects of the eighteen unmixed attributes of a buddha”.

In this presentation the 18 unmixed attributes of the buddha is a different category – it's the fourth category. There is another presentation according to the Great Exposition School, where they talk about the 18 unmixed attributes of the buddha, and when they enumerate them they say it is the 10 powers, the 4 fearlessnesses, and the 4 correct individual knowledges. So they take the first 3 categories, they summarise them, they add up the numbers (10 plus 4 plus 4) and they end up with 18, and they say: these are the 18 unique categories of the buddha. But in our presentation this is a fourth category, a category of its own. So obviously the presentation of the 18 unmixed qualities of the buddha according the Great Exposition School and the Autonomy School are different.

Another interesting thing is in the term itself – so we talk about 18 *unmixed* attributes or qualities. The unmixed here means these are qualities unique to the buddha, and unmixed with those you would find in inferior beings. Inferior beings here can be inferior ordinary beings or inferior aryas. We use the term inferior here because those beings are still in training. So an arya has realisations but their realisations are inferior because that are in training. So the realisations of the buddha are unmixed with the realizations of an inferior arya. The conduct of the buddha is unmixed with the conduct of an inferior arya. And so on and so forth. So that's one way of presenting it. You could say 'unmixed' or unique qualities of the buddha.

In the first paragraph we have this word unmixed, but in the meaning of the text below that we talk about 'six *included within* conduct, six *included within* realisation'. They are different terms and they mean different things. So when you say '*included within* realisation', you are no longer comparing the realisations of buddha with an inferior being. We are saying that within the continuum of a buddha you have six categories that are included within realization and that they are something unique, only existing within the continuum of a buddha. They are unique within the realisations of a buddha. Then you have six included within the conduct of a buddha. So you're no longer comparing the buddha with an inferior arya but you are saying that within the conduct of a buddha this is something very special.



We go into the meaning of the text

***Meaning of the text***

**The unmixed attributes of a buddha are of eighteen [types] because there are:**

**six included within conduct,**

**six included within realizations,**

**three included within exalted activities, and**

**three included within pristine wisdom.**

So we use the term included in each of those sub-categories. So they are included within the continuum of the buddha.

Here we have two sections:

**A. A general indication in this chapter**

**B. A particular explanation of the presentation of the three times.**

In the general indication, which on this occasion means the general teaching, we will go through the general presentation of this whole list of 18, but the last group of 3 deserves its own presentation – because we need to have a presentation of the 3 times on its own. So we have a second part, part B – a particular explanation of the presentation of the three times.

It begins with a definition:

**The definition of an unmixed quality of buddhas is: a final knowledge distinguished by classes and sets of excellent qualities that are not even slightly mixed with those of lesser aryas, in dependence on a final concentration that serves as its empowering condition.**

The last part of the definition is something we should be familiar with. It says “in dependence on a final concentration that serves as its empowering condition.” We understand that as part of the path. And then moving backwards, it says: “not even slightly mixed with those of lesser aryas.” So the term lesser here indicates someone who is still in training. We cannot compare their qualities with those of a buddha. A buddha’s qualities are not of the same caliber, and “are not even slightly mixed” with the qualities we would find in any other

lesser being. So, again moving backwards in the definition, it says: “...distinguished by classes and sets of excellent qualities...”

Geshela says ‘classes and sets’ probably refers to the 39 aspects of awareness aspect found exclusively in a buddha. Not a hundred percent certain, but this is probably what it refers to.

**When divided, there are eighteen because there are:  
six included within conduct,  
six included within realizations,  
three included within enlightened activities, and  
three included within pristine wisdom.**

**The first [regarding conduct] is established because there are:  
pure bodily actions not having *mistakes*, such as stepping on a  
black snake, and so forth;**

It might seem like an unusual example (the reference to the black snake) but actually, if you think about it, when we move around we touch a lot of things – either we step on things such as insects or other living beings, we put our feet anywhere, and we touch different surfaces with our hands, and we do this without any mindfulness or awareness, and this could be wrong conduct. But the buddha does not walk absent mindedly, does not move his arms or feet without any purpose, so the buddha’s conduct is free from these mistakes.

So the first one indicates that the physical activities of the buddha are completely free from any kind of obscuration – afflictive and knowledge obscurations, as regards physical activities.

The second one:

**pure verbal actions not uttering *senseless* noises due to losing  
one’s way, and so forth;**

In the second one it says ‘pure verbal actions’, so again it means that the verbal activity of the buddha is completely free from any kind of obscuration. So it goes on to say: “not uttering senseless noises due to losing one’s way and so forth”. ‘Senseless noises’ really refers to speech that is pointless – verbalising in a meaningless, senseless way

Regarding “senseless noises due to losing one’s way”, we’re talking here about being totally distracted, but also we’re talking about idle speech. So Geshela was saying, imagine the scenario: You’re walking down the street. You’re supposed to go somewhere. You have a particular destination. But you are totally distracted, and all sorts of things come out of your mouth. You don’t utter meaningful speech because you are distracted, but also as you are talking away you lose your way. Instead of taking the right turn, you take the left turn. So you lose your way as well. It’s supposed to be an example of senseless verbal activities that lack mindfulness. Well, the buddha doesn’t have that.

The third one:

**pure mental actions:**

**not having *degeneration of mindfulness*, such as missing out on certain tasks due to forgetfulness,**

Geshela has interpreted this point by using the example of us studying a particular text. Due to degeneration of our mindfulness we forget the words and the meaning of whatever we have studied. But that would not happen to a buddha. A buddha does not have such degeneration of mindfulness.

The fourth one:

**not having *non-equipose of mind* at all times when meditative absorption is appropriate,**

In other words, the buddha is always in equipose.

Now in some texts there is a slight variation of that. It says when meditative absorption is appropriate *or inappropriate*. In our text it doesn’t have the words *or inappropriate*. So you might come across that variation. Anyway, what does it mean? It means the buddha’s mind is always in equipose, but there might be times when it’s appropriate to demonstrate that he’s in equipose, according to the needs of the disciples. And at other times it might be appropriate to demonstrate that he’s not in equipose, – that he’s moving, or eating, or teaching, or engaged in some other activity. So, according to the needs of the disciples, it might be appropriate or not appropriate to

appear that he's in meditative equipoise, but his mind is not in non-equipoise.

So for example we have a phrase in the heart sutra, at the end of the sutra, where it says: then the bhagawan, having arising from concentration said 'well done, well done', congratulating the bodhisattva. Well it says there that the buddha arose from that concentration. In reality the buddha never arose from the concentration but in the perception of the disciples it was suitable for the disciples to see the buddha arising from the concentration and giving validation to what had been explained.

The fifth one:

**not having *discrimination of differences* that hold samsara and nirvana, or cyclic existence and peace, to be [respectively] ultimately discordant and to be peace,**

So here he is saying "not having discrimination of differences," so not seeing a difference that holds samsara and nirvana, or cyclic existence and peace, "to be ultimately discordant and to be peace". Because the thing at question is whether samsara and nirvana, or cyclic existence and peace, are different *ultimately*. Conventionally they are different – quite obviously. One is discordant and needs to be abandoned, and the other one is a state of peace, and it needs to be actualized. So conventionally they are different, but ultimately there is no discrimination or difference between the two.

The buddha does have not discrimination of differences between these two. If he did those two would have to appear as ultimately different. For things to appear as ultimately different they would have to be ultimately established as different. But they do not exist as ultimately established as different. There is nothing that is ultimately established. Full stop.

The sixth one:

**not having *indifference* that neglects to *examine* individually the times to subdue sentient beings and so forth.**

In the original list, when it was introduced in *Haribhadra's Clear Meaning*, number 6 was: 'the indifference in not examining

individually'. And here we are unpacking the term. It says: 'not having indifference that neglects to examine individually the times to subdue sentient beings and so forth.' So a buddha does not neglect to examine whether this is now the right time for a particular sentient being or not.

Where it says 'and so forth' it refers to examining the suitable method needed for individuals (in addition to the suitable time). To be indifferent and to fail to examine such things individually for every sentient being would amount to neglect, but a buddha does not neglect to examine individually.

So up to here we have presented the first six, which are included within conduct. And now we're going to do the second category – the six included within realization.

**The second [regarding realizations] is established because the tathagata has the six:**

The first one:

**an aspect not having degeneration of the aspiration that is a continuous arising of the desire to enact the welfare of sentient beings at all times, and for the qualities of love, great compassion, and so forth;**

So there is no degeneration because there is continuity. And continuity here means those qualities (the urge or the wish to help sentient beings) are present in the mind of a buddha at all times. So if it is constantly present it means it has not degenerated. And in addition the word 'continuous' here means uninterrupted, so this desire to enact the welfare of sentient beings is there at all times – continuously, uninterrupted. But also the qualities of love, great compassion and so forth, at all times, uninterrupted, are present in the mind of a buddha.

The second one:

**an aspect not having degeneration of the *joyous effort* that descends in countless world systems for the sake of each and every sentient being;**

So again at all times, continuously, the buddha does not become tired of visiting various world systems because there are so many sentient beings in need in all of these world systems. So, because he is continuously showing joyous effort, there is no degeneration of joyous effort.

The third one:

**an aspect not having degeneration of *mindfulness* that, due to having placed the mental behavior of all sentient beings of the three times, the method for subduing them, and so forth in the pathway of mindfulness, does not need to think about them later (and there are some words missing so please add:) from enlightenment**

So it means from the time a buddha becomes enlightened onwards.

So what does that say? It says from the moment a buddha becomes enlightened he has a complete knowledge of the predispositions of sentient beings, of their interests, of the right time and method to subdue them, what should be taught to them, and that comprehension of all these aspects is committed to the memory of the buddha, and that means that later on the buddha does not have to think about any of these with regards to any sentient being. As soon as the opportunity arises the buddha can enact immediately whatever is most beneficial for that sentient being. So in the text it says: “sentient beings of the three times, the method for subduing them, *and so forth*” – ‘and so forth’ there includes the time, the method, the predispositions and interests.

So we actually have non-degeneration of mindfulness in two different lists. We have non-degeneration of mindfulness in the first category, which is included within conduct. But this one is included within realization. The first one that was included within conduct, first line of page 73, referred to having forgotten the words or the meaning of a particular text. Here, it’s a different type of mindfulness. Here it refers to the buddha not forgetting exactly what is needed for every sentient being.

The fourth one:

**an aspect not having degeneration of the *concentration* that is placed in meditative equipoise on the thusness of all phenomena;**

There's no degeneration of this concentration because the buddha remains in meditative equipoise. Because the buddha is always in equipoise there is no degeneration of concentration.

The next one:

**an aspect not having degeneration of the inexhaustible wisdom that knows the mental behavior of sentient beings and the Dharma to be taught**

This does not require much elaboration.

The sixth one:

**an aspect not having *degeneration* of the inexhaustible liberation with regard to the welfare of sentient beings as long as samsara exists.**

This last point follows from the first and second points – that a buddha always has the aspiration, continuously, to work for the welfare of sentient beings. So here it talks about “inexhaustible liberation with regard to the welfare of sentient beings”. It means the buddha will always continuously teach whatever is appropriate – the four noble truths, or bodhicitta, or whatever the disciples need to hear, continuously, without degeneration.

The next one:

**The third [regarding enlightened activities] is established because there are (i) aspects that are preceded by pristine wisdom, due to arising from the cause that is a previously arisen pristine wisdom, and (ii) aspects that follow pristine wisdom, that is, the three:**

**the enlightened activity of the *exalted body* that subdues sentient beings by way of radiating light and so forth,**

**the enlightened activity of the *exalted speech* that provides instructions in accordance with the thinking of sentient beings and so forth, and  
the enlightened activity of the *exalted mind* that has abandoned all the latencies without exception and possesses great love.**

So enlightened activities of body, speech and mind.

In the first one we have examples of enlightened activities of the body such as radiating light, and we include the whole array of the 32 major and 80 minor marks of the buddha. So all of those signs and marks are there in order to subdue sentient beings. So, for instance, emanating light from different parts of the body is an example of that.

The next one – the enlightened activity of the exalted speech. A buddha teaches and gives instructions according to the interests, and predispositions, as well as the capacities, of those to be trained.

The third one is enlightened activity of the mind. Which mind? The mind that has abandoned all the latencies, afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations without exception, and possesses great love.

Okay let's go to the beginning of this sentence, where it says "aspects that are preceded by pristine wisdom". What is the meaning of that? It is actually the pristine wisdom dharma body that is the main cause that gives rise to these three types of enlightened activity. So obviously pristine wisdom must come first, as the cause. So they are *preceded* by pristine wisdom, due to arising from the cause that is a previously arisen pristine wisdom. That should be clear – number 1. Then number 2 says: aspects that *follow from* pristine wisdom. Okay, this can be taken literally. They follow from pristine wisdom because pristine wisdom has preceded them. So that's another way of phrasing number 1. But then you could put a comma there and could say *simultaneously* with pristine wisdom. That means they co-exist – so that's another interpretation. Either you can say they follow from pristine wisdom or you can say they co-exist, simultaneously with pristine wisdom.

**The fourth [regarding exalted wisdoms] is established because, regarding all phenomena that have arisen in the *past*, will arise in the *future*, and are arising in the *present*, there are the three aspects of pristine wisdom that are (i) unattached due to**



**knowing by way of mere acceptance, and (ii) unimpeded due to knowing all.**

So what it's saying here is that a buddha has knowledge of the three times – the past, the present and the future – in a way that is without any attachment and is also not hindered by any knowledge obscurations. Why? Because it is omniscience – it knows everything.

This understanding of the past, present and future is unimpeded or unobstructed. If it were obstructed then, when he comprehended the past, he would only comprehend the past, and would not have knowledge of the present and the future. But that's not the way it is. When he comprehends the past that knowledge that comprehends the past is also unimpeded in understanding simultaneously the present and future. Also the knowledge that comprehends the present is not limited or impeded in only understanding the present. That knowledge of the present is at the same time unimpeded in understanding the past and the future.

So the understanding of the three times is unhindered, unimpeded.

We'll stop here.